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Economic and Social Council

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Commission on the Status of Women
Fifty-ninth session
9-20 March 2015
Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century"

Statement submitted by Asian-Eurasian Human Rights Forum, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council*

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* The present statement is issued without formal editing.

14-66598 (E) 160115

Please recycle

Statement

About 250 internally displaced women from Indian administered part of the State of Jammu and Kashmir, who had sought safety in the capital city of Delhi in the aftermath of their exodus owing to terrorist attacks on their religious minority community in their places of origin in 1990, were provided with temporary employment as trained graduate and post-graduate teachers in the Education Department of Delhi Administration. We appreciate Government of India's humanistic approach to their plight by providing them succour at a critical time in their lives.

It is the 24th year of their exile. All these years they remained temporarily employed. Unfortunately, these internally displaced persons have been discriminated against in a number of ways in terms of service conditions. Their service in Delhi administration has not been regularized; they are made to work on temporary basis almost like daily wagers which deprives them of various benefits like pension, provident fund, health care, etc. while these and many more benefits are admissible to teachers of regular category in the same department. They are not even granted maternity leave while their colleagues in the same institutions enjoy that privilege.

These teachers are paid less than half of what their equals with same qualification and equal work load are paid by way of monthly salary by the Delhi administration.

When they retire from service after having put long tenure of more than 25 years or more, they receive no pension, no gratuity, no provident fund, and no leave salary while their colleagues with same qualification and quantum of work receive all these benefits that make their post-retirement life comfortable. And, when they go home after rendering 25 or 30 years of service, they go empty handed. It is worst type of exploitation as they have nothing to fall back upon.

Meting out discriminatory treatment to them contravenes the clauses of the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women incorporated in the Beijing Declaration which was announced on the occasion of the Fourth World Conference on Women.

The convention states: "Equal rights of men and women are explicitly mentioned in the Preamble to the Charter of United Nations. All the major international human rights include sex as one of the grounds upon which states may not discriminate."

Item 225 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women stipulates: "Many women face additional barriers to the enjoyment of their human rights because of such factors as their race, language, ethnicity, culture, religion, desirability or socio-economic class or because they are indigenous people, migrants, displaced women or refugees."

Again, item 226 states: "The factors that cause the flight of refugee women, other displaced women in need of international protection and internally displaced women may be different from those affecting men. These women continue to be vulnerable to abuses of their human rights during and after their flight."

Honourable Chairperson, the condition of some of these internally displaced persons who worked for twenty-five years or more as temporary teachers is miserable as they have nothing to fall back upon. During the prime of their youth, they served the nation in their humble way making all possible sacrifices. But at the sunset of their lives, they are left empty handed. It is unjust.

We are familiar with their plight. Through your good offices, we entreat the Government of India that as a signatory to the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, it should consider the case of 250 trained graduate and post graduate teachers, who are victims of ethnic cleansing in Kashmir, be brought at par with regularized teachers in respect of pension and related service benefits. They have to fend for their families and they expect civil society to be generous and sympathetic to their plight.

Our organization has closely interacted with these helpless persons and understood their problem. We, therefore, request that the Government of India is prompted to consider their case in the light of following suggestions:

All such teachers as fall under the category of Kashmir migrant teachers are regularized by the Education Department of Delhi administration. They are entitled to pension, general provident fund/cumulative provident fund/health-care assistance, house rent allowances, dearness allowances and other perks. Those who have attained superannuation as "migrant teachers" are entitled to pension benefits at par with all other categories of teachers in Delhi administration. Arrears of emolument on account of difference of authorized and actual payments and pension with retrospective effect (from the date of superannuation) are sanctioned in their favour.

We regret to say that these 250 odd teachers have been discriminated against on account of gender and their displacement. Their human rights have been blatantly violated on these two counts.

Moreover their helplessness caused by government's failure to provide them protection of life and honour in their original habitats as stipulated in the Indian Constitution, has been exploited by the Delhi administration by not regularizing them, paying them just one third of the authorized salary as against regular teachers, denying them promotion, pension and other service benefits.

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Statement submitted by Association africaine de l'eau, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council*

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* The present statement is issued without formal editing.

14-66599 (E) 060215

Please recycle

Statement

Water management and desalination key to building a fairer and more equal world for men and women

The year 2015 was the deadline that the international community set itself for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) established in 2000 in New York. Those goals addressed the major humanitarian challenges of: reducing extreme poverty and infant mortality; combating various epidemics including AIDS; ensuring access to education; promoting gender equality; and implementing sustainable development. One of the sub-items was to halve the number of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation. That objective was reached in the majority of the countries comprising our community; unfortunately, however, Africa did not follow suit. Once again, the continent was not able to keep its international commitments and water remains, for many people, a rare commodity obtained through extreme sacrifice. At a time when the United Nations is working with Governments, civil society and various other partners to use the momentum generated by the MDG to plan ambitious post-2015 programmes, the majority of developing countries continue to face huge difficulties and still have many shortfalls to tackle.

Of course, in this context of extreme insecurity, it is women that bear the brunt of the delays that have occurred. In the specific context of our work, it is well known that when there is no water in the house it is women who are responsible for collecting it - a task that is often exhausting and sometimes forces women to travel very long distances and transport very heavy loads. That situation cannot fail to adversely affect their physical and psychological integrity.

In 1995, when the Commission on the Status of Women met in Beijing and presented its plan of action for the years to come, we were all full of hope, since such action would strengthen women's social, economic and political power, improve their health, facilitate their access to education and protect their reproductive rights. Today we are witnessing a sad state of affairs for a great many women in developing countries. Indeed, what privileges can women enjoy in society if they are recognized merely as water collectors for their families? What kind of education can we envisage for young girls if, because of their water duties, they are the first to get up in the morning and the last to go to bed and their studies suffer as a result? What kind of health can we hope for from women who are required to fulfil such cumbersome daily duties and travel several kilometres on foot just to find water? Not to mention the risks associated with the quality of that water, which is often collected in dire conditions and endangers the health and even the lives of the entire family? That is the kind of injustice that so many women are forced to suffer even in today's world — women who are not entitled to the same privileges as men and whose future is blocked by their very status as women.

With the help of their development partners, Governments are making a commitment to support populations throughout their territories and to accelerate mechanisms that will enable universal access to drinking water. But the other solution would be to improve the performance of water companies in order to build their capacity to supply households with clean water, not only in rural areas but also, and above all, in towns, where a significant portion of the population still lives in abject poverty. That is the mission that our organization, a grouping of around a

hundred water and sanitation companies, has pursued since its creation in 1980, For some years, we have been developing programmes and partnerships between water companies because we understand that the best way for a company to improve the way in which it operates is to interact with other, more successful companies. Specifically, I can tell you about a partnership we are currently building in Bamako, Mali. Bamako is a town of almost two million inhabitants that is suffering from a very serious shortage of drinking water. It is common to see women with bowls on their heads, walking from district to district in search of a source of drinking water in order to stock up. One of the reasons for that situation is that the only water company in the country has long been registering very significant losses; that is known in our jargon as "unbilled water", which drags down operational performance. Indeed, between 2011 and 2012 the Mali Drinking Water Management Corporation (SOMAGEP) registered a marked decrease in overall performance, with a drop in production of 3.3 per cent. Overall losses in the production-sales ratio reached 27.5 million cubic metres (mm^3) in 2012. You can understand that such a deficit has an impact on households, which rely, as they always have done, on women to carry out water duties.

That is why the Association africaine de l'eau, through its Water Operators Partnership Africa programme, has facilitated a partnership between SOMAGEP and the National Office for Electricity and Drinking Water of Morocco in order to improve SOMAGEP's performance by reducing the losses associated with unbilled water in Bamako. Currently, the results of that partnership are evident in two areas. Firstly, SOMAGEP created a metrology department and a service to improve output; on the operational level, the company then trained staff to detect and search for leaks. In a few weeks, we will be able to evaluate the impact of the partnership on SOMAGEP's performance and assess how life has been improved for households, and women in particular.

All such initiatives, if encouraged and supported, should enable our continent to make up ground with regard to access to drinking water and proper sanitation. Women will undoubtedly be the main beneficiaries. They will be able to obtain water simply by turning on the tap in their kitchen or bathroom — an action that seems mundane to most of us, but imagine what it represents for millions of women living in insecure parts of our large cities. Imagine what it represents for our young girls who are deprived of a school education and for all those rural women who also aspire to a better life! Furthermore, many of our societies have been trying for several years, and with great success, to increase the number of women in employment. By becoming significant providers of work for female populations, they contribute to the economic and social empowerment of those women.

It is vital to invest in the water and sanitation sectors if we want to build fairer and more equal societies where men and women, boys and girls, can legitimately aspire to greater comfort and well-being. We are therefore making this plea to donors so that they will tackle the issue head-on and direct their efforts towards capacity building among water companies.

The Association africaine de l'eau is prepared to serve as an interface for partnerships that aim to create or revitalize programmes that benefit water and sanitation companies. We have experience and our member companies have expertise that they can share. With adequate support, we will most assuredly succeed in helping a great many households and alleviating the suffering of women

caused by the lack of accessible water, thus contributing to the creation of a fairer, more equal world for men and women.

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Statement submitted by Association de défense des droits de l'homme, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council*

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* The present statement is issued without formal editing.

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Please recycle

Statement

The Association de défense des droits de l'homme [Association for the Defence of Human Rights], founded in 2000, aims to combat human rights violations, particularly discrimination. Since late 2003 the organization has focused particularly on Islamophobia in view of the growing number of acts directed against Muslims and the lack of engagement of traditional anti-racist organizations in this area.

The frequency of acts of anti-Muslim racism has increased sharply since 2009, as shown in our own annual reports (an increase of 47.3 per cent from 2012 to 2013), and the reports of the Commission nationale consultative des droits de l'homme [French National Consultative Commission on Human Rights] and Amnesty International.

These annual surveys of acts of Islamophobia show that two criteria for discrimination coexist in the manifestation of Islamophobia: religion and gender. In almost 80 per cent of cases, the victim is female, mostly a woman wearing the veil.

Islamophobia is manifested in all areas of everyday life, in the form of denial of access to education, instruction, training, educational support, employment, health, marriage, citizenship, participation in the Journée défense et citoyenneté [day of defence and citizenship education for young French citizens] and leisure activities, and in the form of acts of verbal or physical violence.

Thus Islamophobia impedes the achievement of effective equality between the sexes and increased autonomy for women.

Two major prohibitionist laws have contributed to the legalization of discriminatory practices and the general exclusion of women wearing the veil from all areas of everyday life, especially the political, institutional, civil, economic, social and cultural spheres. These are the Act of 15 March 2004 prohibiting the conspicuous wearing of religious clothing or symbols in State primary and secondary schools (known as the schools anti-veil law); and the Act of 11 October 2010 prohibiting the concealment of the face in public areas (known as the anti-full-face-veil law).

Today, the entire French political arena is closed to Muslim women who wear the veil – with the exception of a few isolated local cases, such as the right-wing local councillor in Ezanville, who was boycotted by opposition politicians when she attended a council meeting in 2014 wearing a veil. Her opponents used the pretext of a radical interpretation of the principle of secularism, which claims that individual beliefs are strictly confined to the individual's private life. In 2009, the decision by the extreme left-wing party Nouveau Parti Anticapitaliste [New Anticapitalist Party] to present Ms Ilham Moussaid as its main candidate in the Vaucluse regional elections provoked such a hostile reaction that Ms Moussaid, whose candidature was not unanimously supported even within her own party, was forced to withdraw from the election campaign.

Abuses of power and incidents of discrimination also take place in the naturalization services, through the refusal to conduct an interview unless the woman removes her headscarf, or rejection of an application for citizenship because the candidate wears the veil.

The display in public of beliefs which the authorities consider suspicious may also be used to justify a refusal to conduct a marriage at the town hall or to insist on many interviews before the ceremony is allowed to go ahead.

Girls considering a career in the army as they reach the age of legal majority find that they are not allowed to participate in the Journée défense et citoyenneté unless they remove their veils. The Fédération Française de Football [French Football Federation] does not allow its sportswomen to wear veils while playing, citing the principle of secularism.

Following the example of public institutions, certain associations serving the most disadvantaged groups, such as Secours Populaire and Restos du Coeur, refuse offers of voluntary work from women wearing the veil and direct them instead to the Islamic charity Secours Islamique.

In State primary schools, mothers wearing the veil are systematically forbidden to go on school trips and sometimes encounter these same difficulties when picking their children up from school or when they wish to attend a parent-teacher meeting.

In middle and high schools, even if Muslim girls take off their veils as they enter the school, they are constantly criticized because their style of dress is considered overtly religious by the school staff. Wearing a headband which covers too much of the hair, over-long or very dark-coloured skirts (sometimes referred to as "Islamic skirts"), excessively loose-fitting clothing, etc. is used as a reason to exclude a pupil temporarily or permanently, which disrupts these girls' education or brings it to an end altogether, to say nothing of the psychological effects of these symbolic assaults.

Higher education establishments, both State and private, likewise discriminate against women who adopt a style of dress which the establishments consider too Islamic.

In France, women suffer considerable discrimination in the world of work, particularly in the areas of pay and promotion prospects. Islamic women who wear the veil are, in addition, subjected to discrimination based on their ethnic, social and religious origins. They are completely barred from working for the State if they display signs of their religious affiliation in public. The vast majority of private companies consider that employing women who wear the veil adversely affects their public image. In case law, wearing the veil when dealing with customers is considered a valid reason for dismissal, as well as wearing a veil when working with children in a private kindergarten where this is prohibited by the establishment's internal rules (decision of the Court of Cassation of 16 June 2014). Clearly, women who wear the veil are unable to work in France, a state of affairs which seriously affects their economic and social independence and, indirectly, promotes a lack of interest in education, instruction and training among girl children and adolescents, since their studies will never culminate in a professional career.

The same demands are illegally imposed by certain health professionals when women seek access to health care, in leisure activities (sports centres, bowling alleys, restaurants, etc.), at driving schools when women seek to obtain the driving licence which is their passport to freedom, etc.

The main effect of the Act of 11 October 2010 has been to impede the freedom of movement of women wearing full-face veils and to make them liable to police identity checks which are sometimes abusive, humiliating and violent.

Since 2013, the acts of physical violence committed in public against Muslim women, most of them veiled, by neighbours, strangers or police officers have come to epitomize the rise in sexist, Islamophobic acts and the indifference of the authorities and the media, which continue to act as channels for prejudice against Muslim women. Even when women are the victims, they are denied the right to speak or their word is doubted. For example, after the series of physical attacks on women in Argenteuil in May and June 2013, the media did not believe the statements of the last victim, who was pregnant at the time of the incident, until she lost her baby.

Statistics

Almost 80 per cent of Islamophobic acts are aimed at women.

Over 50 per cent of these acts occur in the context of public services, including over 20 per cent in an educational context and over 15 per cent in higher education.

Recommendations

- Ensure that acts of discrimination and violence committed by public authorities and the highest ranks of the State against women wearing the veil are strongly and publicly condemned.
- Make the fight against Islamophobia a national priority, on a par with the fight against other types of discrimination.
- Prepare a situation assessment (quantitative and qualitative) of Islamophobia (against women) in France.
- Oblige the police to record complaints, using a precise set of definitions, to facilitate the generation of statistics on violence against (Muslim) women.
- Produce studies on racial violence against women.
- Ensure that no further laws are adopted which stigmatize Muslim women and restrict their fundamental freedoms.
- Monitor the effectiveness of judicial and administrative sanctions imposed on institutions and organizations which discriminate against or stigmatize women because of their religion (or perceived religion).
- Take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against (Muslim) women by any person, organization or firm.
- Take all appropriate measures to repeal the Acts of 15 March 2004 and 11 October 2010 and all regulations which discriminate against women.

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Statement submitted by Association of War-Affected Women, Bangladesh Nari Progati Sangha, Center for Women's Global Leadership, Education International, Equidad de Género: Ciudadania, Trabajo y Familia, Forum for Women and Development, Fundación para Estudio e Investigación de la Mujer, Women's International Cross-Cultural Exchange, International Alliance of Women, International Federation of University Women, International Federation of Women Lawyers, International Federation of Women in Legal Careers, International Public Policy Institute, International Women's Health Coalition, International Women's Rights Action Watch Asia Pacific, Medical Women's International Association, National Council of Women of the United States, People's Decade of Human Rights Education, Tandem Project, Union de l'action féminine, Women and Modern World Centre, Women's Global Network for Reproductive Rights, Women's Intercultural Network, World Federation for Mental Health and World Young Women's Christian Association, non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council*

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* The present statement is issued without formal editing.

14-66601 (E) 200115

Please recycle

Statement

Equality, Development and Peace: 2015 and Beyond

The Center for Women's Global Leadership at Rutgers University and the undersigned organizations welcome the 59th session of the Commission on the Status of Women to review and appraise the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action along with the opportunity to contribute to the integration of gender perspectives in the post 2015 development agenda.

2015 is a critical year for the United Nations, Member States and all the peoples of the world. We believe in the indivisibility of human rights — economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights — and their critical relevance for 2015 and beyond for individuals and groups as part of an interconnected humanity.

The world has changed dramatically since the Beijing conference in 1995. In this changing global context, women have often been disproportionately impacted because of the many roles that they play and their intersectional identities that target them for multiple forms of oppression, exploitation and discrimination.

- Macroeconomic Policy: The growing dominance of finance in the economy and in people's lives in countries large and small coupled with the growing economic interconnectedness of nations has meant that economic policies have powerful impacts within and across borders. Economic inequalities within and between countries has grown. The global financial crisis of 2008 often meant bailouts for private banks paid for by low and middle income households. The ever expanding role of private sector actors in the business of development both alone and in concert with governments has shifted power relationships. These developments have in many cases exacerbated and widened inequalities between and within nations and peoples, endangering efforts to realize human rights.

- Women's Work: In parts of the world, women's paid employment has increased, particularly on the global assembly line, but their increased participation in the labour force has not translated into decent work — equitable pay, safe working conditions and adequate benefits. Migrant women continue to face multiple forms of discrimination as they seek work opportunities outside their home countries. The unequal distribution of unpaid care work continues to negatively affect women's enjoyment of rights to health, leisure and participation as well as their right to work. The global climate crisis has reduced women's efforts in many countries to build sustainable livelihoods and in some cases threatened the very existence of their communities.

- Gender-Based Violence and Militarism: Despite the efforts of women around the world, gender-based violence perpetrated by State actors, exacerbated by the proliferation of the use of small arms in cases of intimate partner violence and sexual violence during and after conflict continues to be a daily reality for many women. The proliferation of small arms and nuclear weapons as a means of power continues to pose a threat to a peaceful and sustainable future, and will continue to contribute to conflict violence and gender-based violence globally. These realities are testimony to the ongoing and expanded need for a bold global partnership committed to the realization of human rights for all.

We call upon all Member States to use a human rights framework to shape a new global understanding of development partnerships and a clear commitment to a global, enabling macroeconomic environment.

Address macroeconomic policies that foster equality within and between States:

- Recognizing the role played by financial globalization and affirming the critical importance of recognition of social and economic rights as addressed in the International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights;
- Developing global consensus on human rights accountability for all actors: international financial institutions, multinational corporations, credit rating agencies, national governments, and trade agreements — multilateral, bilateral and regional, and civil society;
- Utilizing international human rights treaty process to monitor accountability through transparency and rulemaking, including a system of peer-to-peer monitoring of all countries using the Universal Periodic Review and similar human rights mechanisms for monitoring, evaluation and comparison in order to measure improvements in human rights obligations;
- Recognizing the necessity of a strong regulatory environment and appropriate macroeconomic management to mobilize local resources for the realization of rights; and
- Promoting universal acceptance and implementation by all development actors — public and private — of extra territorial economic and social rights obligations as envisioned in the Maastricht Principles for Extraterritorial Obligations.

Support policies and programs that foster poverty alleviation and women's right to work and sustainable livelihoods, based on substantive equality and recognizing both women's public and private lives:

- Promoting and protecting the human rights of women through the full implementation of all human rights instruments, especially the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, eliminating discrimination based on race, disability, migrant or indigenous status, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, etc.;
- Fostering policies that protect the rights of women to decent work, including equitable pay and benefits, safe working conditions, and the right to organize;
- Expanding assessment of the realization of women's sexual and reproductive rights and how it is linked to their rights at work;
- Fostering policies to support and legally guarantee women's rights to control over land, property and productive resources; and
- Recognizing the value of unpaid care work and redistribution of paid and unpaid care work, which should be achieved within the household and between the household and the public sphere, through public provision of care services, government incentives, labour laws and regulations, and equality legislation, etc.

Promote policies that address detrimental effects of militarism and militarization on social and environmental sustainability:

- Recognizing gender-based violence perpetrated by State actors, as well as non-State actors, to achieve political, economic, and social control over individuals and communities;
- Developing systems of accountability and regulation for transnational corporations, including in extractive industries, and private military companies;
- Developing global protocols to regulate and curb the sale of the global small arms market and implementing strategies for the prevention, protection, justice and service to survivors;
- Supporting and protecting the human rights of Women Human Rights Defenders who are routinely silenced, threatened, and killed for calling for human rights values to be respected; and
- Insisting upon women's participation in peace negotiations and other transitional processes.

We call on the Commission on the Status of Women to facilitate leadership to support States and other development actors in the development of a global partnership that honours human rights obligations and works for their realization in all countries — implementing all existing commitments to women's equality and empowerment and respecting international human rights and agreements.

Endorsed by

Association of War-Affected Women

Bangladesh Nari Progati Sangha

Center for Women's Global Leadership

Education International

Forum for Women and Development

Fundación para Estudio e Investigación de la Mujer

International Alliance of Women

International Federation of University Women

International Federation of Women Lawyers

International Federation of Women in Legal Careers

International Public Policy Institute

International Women's Rights Action Watch Asia Pacific

National Council of Women of the United States

Tandem Project

"Women and Modern World" Social Charitable Centre

World Federation for Mental Health

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Statement submitted by Centro de Culturas Indígenas del Perú, Católicas por el Derecho a Decidir and Fundación para Estudio e Investigación de la Mujer, non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council*

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* The present statement is issued without formal editing.

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Please recycle

Statement

The constituent organizations of the NGO Committee on the Status of Women of Latin America and the Caribbean welcome the fact that the Commission on the Status of Women is considering, at its fifty-ninth session, the progress made and the obstacles and challenges encountered in the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, and that it is promoting reflection and analysis to accelerate the achievement of gender equality and rights of women and girls. Furthermore, that will contribute to the establishment of Sustainable Development Goals based on human rights, particularly the rights of women and girls, which will be approved in 2015 and will guide policies towards 2030.

Sustainable development is not possible unless gender equality and the rights of women and girls are guaranteed. Therefore, an assessment of the difficulties and obstacles facing the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action is vital in helping to avoid errors when finalizing the goals and their indicators in the post-2015 process.

We note with concern how in Latin America and the Caribbean, one of the regions of the world where there have been major advances in women's equality and rights, those advances have been largely at the legislative level and, in many countries, have not been translated into an improvement in living conditions for women and girls, especially the most vulnerable such as indigenous women, women of African descent, migrants, refugees, those living with HIV, disabled women and those with particular sexual orientations and identities.

Much of the progress that has been achieved in Latin America and the Caribbean is due to the pressure and activism of the various women's and feminist organizations that already existed before Beijing and that were working for gender equality. Following Beijing, they have redoubled their efforts and made an irrefutable contribution to progress in the region.

Sadly, Latin America and the Caribbean is the most unequal region in the world. While there has been a reduction in poverty, inequality between the highest and lowest income quintiles has grown, affecting mostly women and young people. Therefore, development without a human rights framework guaranteeing a more equal distribution of resources and productive income so that everyone may enjoy the minimum levels essential for a dignified life is not real development. That requires a different development model and a different use of resources and territory, as well as tax changes to ensure a more just and egalitarian distribution.

Social security and its traditional redistribution component exclude those working in the informal sector, a group growing in size in our countries and in which women predominate. New working arrangements, the development and widespread use of new technology, together with precarious forms of employment that are now hindering the inclusion of more women and young people in the formal work sector, demand a review of models of solidarity in and between countries, which regrettably have not yet been developed.

In this context, respect for reproductive health and rights is essential. Morbidity and mortality associated with pregnancy, childbirth and puerperium, complications resulting from unsafe abortions and infection with HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases that affect a large percentage of vulnerable women

across the world are obstacles to development that cast a shadow over any progress made. Added to that is the death and suffering of so many women and girls who are today subjected to violence solely on account of their gender. Such violence is resulting much more frequently in femicide and occasions not only the senseless loss of young women in their productive and reproductive prime, but also the deterioration and suffering of their families, especially their children. Violence against women is a human rights violation that is on the increase in the region and, although there exist laws and regulations in many countries in the region, impunity, difficulties in accessing justice for women who experience violence and a lack of preventive action are the norm in our countries.

Violence against women and girls is not only a weapon of war during occupation and armed conflicts, it is also an infringement of fundamental human rights of women such as the rights to life, to bodily integrity, to health and to freedom from torture and discrimination.

The women and girls of Latin America and the Caribbean and women and girls throughout the world cannot wait another 20 years!

On behalf of the NGO Committee on the Status of Women of Latin America and the Caribbean:

- Fundación para Estudio e Investigación de la Mujer, Argentina
- Católicas por el Derecho a Decidir, Mexico
- Centro de Culturas Indígenas del Perú, Peru

The following organizations comprise the NGO Committee on the Status of Women of Latin America and the Caribbean: Fundación para Estudio e Investigación de la Mujer, Argentina; Grassroots Organisations Operating Together in Sisterhood; Católicas por el Derecho a Decidir, Mexico; Latin American Committee for the Defence of Women's Rights; Network of Non-Governmental Organizations of Trinidad and Tobago for the Advancement of Women; Red de Educación Popular entre Mujeres; Centro de Culturas Indígenas del Perú, Peru; Colectiva Mujer y Salud, Dominican Republic.

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Statement submitted by AARP, Alzheimer's Disease International — International Federation of Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders Societies, Guild of Service, HelpAge International, Instituto Qualivida, International Council on Social Welfare, International Longevity Center Global Alliance, International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse, National Council of Women of Great Britain, Soroptimist International and Widows for Peace through Democracy, non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council*

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* The present statement is issued without formal editing.

14-66604 (E) 200115

Please recycle

Statement

Older women and Beijing: 20 years on

In the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action 20 years ago, the Beijing Declaration recognised age discrimination as one of the factors contributing to the barriers to women's empowerment and advancement. Older women were specifically mentioned in the Beijing Platform for Action with regard to their poverty, health, violence against them, obstacles they face in entering the labour market, discrimination at work and as a civilian group particularly affected by armed conflict. Demographic ageing in developed and developing countries and the need for age-disaggregated data were emphasised. Recommendations for government action were made in each of these areas but there were also gaps, including the complete omission of widows and widowhood.

Beijing+20 review

A review by HelpAge International of how these recommendations were being implemented by governments as part of the Beijing+15 review in 2010 revealed that older women and population ageing were a low priority for the vast majority of countries reviewed.

Five years on, as part of 20-year review of implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, governments have been asked by the United Nations Women to provide information on the situation of older women wherever possible. This review of 131 Member States' national reports explores the extent to which they have done that. Despite a growing body of evidence on discrimination affecting women in older age and the adoption of a new Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women General Recommendation on the rights of older women (No. 27, 2010), the challenges older women face are almost entirely absent from these national 20-year reviews of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action.

Achievements and challenges since 1995

Only 21 reports (16 per cent of the 131 reports reviewed) specifically mentioned older women or ageing in their review of achievements and challenges. The achievements mentioned were raising of retirement ages, supporting older women's employment, abolishing gender differences in pensions, a law addressing multiple discrimination and specific projects for older women. Two reports recognised population ageing as a challenge. The other challenges listed included older women's poverty, lower pensions than men and multiple discrimination based on gender and older age.

Implementation of 12 areas since 2009

A. Women and Poverty

Thirty-three reports recognise the particular poverty that older women experience. Some countries identify older women, and in particular single older women who live alone, as among the most at risk of poverty. Others provide data

showing that the difference in poverty rates between men and women is highest in the over 65 age group. The most common reason given is lower pensions due to gender inequalities in the work histories. Social security policies to address this gender inequality are the most common response given, in line with the recommendation (58 o) in the Beijing Platform for Action.

B. Education and Training of Women

Only one country described educational opportunities for older women.

C. Women and Health

The Beijing Platform for Action recognises older women's distinct reproductive and sexual health issues, and that these are often inadequately addressed (95). However, only three of these reports reviewed mentioned menopause and only one the use of contraception by women over 50. The Beijing Platform for Action also states that with increased life expectancy health concerns of older women require particular attention (101). Twelve reports mentioned cancer screening programmes which include some older women but which all have upper age limits. Only two reports mention any other specific health concerns for women in older age, osteoporosis in one report and experiencing higher rates of injury and hospitalising due to fall-related injuries than men in another. There was no mention of dementia or other mental health issues older women experience.

D. Violence against women

The Beijing Platform for Action recognises older women are particularly vulnerable to violence (116). Thirteen of the reports recognise that women are at risk of violence in older age but only two reports refer to a specific form of violence that disproportionately affects older women: medication abuse and witchcraft related killings. There is no reference to the violence older women may experience in the different settings where they receive care and support, to neglect or to financial exploitation and abuse.

E. Women and armed conflict

One report references a study on internally displaced and conflict-affected women that included a focus on older women. Another says that data on asylum seekers is available disaggregated by age and sex.

F. Women and the economy

The Beijing Platform for Action recommends governments implement support programmes that enhance the self-reliance of older women (175 d) and tackle discrimination in the workplace especially considering older women workers (178 c). Seventeen reports addressed older women's employment and the barriers they face. One report addressed the burden of unpaid care work on older women and another that the additional work that women do in resource poor settings ages them prematurely. One country reported that gender pay gaps increase with age, the biggest pay gap being in the age group 60-70. The report stated that reasons for this are not clear, especially given the fact that women in this country are more educated than men. Differences in retirement ages were mentioned in two reports.

G. Women in power and decision-making

One country presented information on participation in decision making disaggregated by age. In this case the oldest women elected to a constitutional assembly was 66 years old. The oldest man was 80.

H. Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women

Three reports referred to older women. One referred to a new divorce law that splits pension entitlements between the man and the women. The second referred to a European Union Ministerial level workshop on labour market activation of older women. The third included a government funded report on issues facing older women.

I. Human Rights of Women

Three reports reviewed refer to older women, both in relation to laws that address multiple-discrimination where both age and sex are prohibited grounds. One report described the setting up of a body to regulate standards related to the care of older women (and men).

J. Women and the media

Two reports discussed the negative images of older women in the media: one described a project aimed to break stereotypes of beauty based on youth in order to increase women's self-esteem, regardless of age. The other recognised that images of women are often degrading but that data on older women was rarely collected or analysed as a separate group.

K. Women and the environment

None of the reports addressed older women.

L. The girl child

One report mentioned an intergenerational activity between children and older people generally.

Section 3. Statistical data

The availability of data on older women disaggregated by age varies enormously from one report to another. Overall availability of age and sex disaggregated data over the age of 65 is weak although 11 reports provide disaggregated data on poverty rates or risk of poverty for older women. Eight reports said they had data on physical and sexual violence that had an upper age limit of 74.

Section 4. Future priorities

Two of the reports reviewed identified population ageing as a future priority. Three recognised the need to look at women's diversity, including based on age, in their gender equality policies. Four said that social protection to ensure older women's income security was a priority. Individual reports prioritised older women's social inclusion, employment, care, health and rural transport respectively.

Conclusions

The only areas where older women have received any significant attention in the reviews are in relation to their poverty and barriers to employment. With regard to other aspects of their lives, older women are virtually ignored in the other 10 areas. Their sexual and reproductive health has been almost completely ignored

and there is no recognition of, or data on, the violence they face in the different settings where they live.

There are occasional mentions of the intersectional discrimination that older women face: in the need to break stereotypes of beauty based on youth, of their disproportionate subjection to medication abuse. However, what these 20-year reviews indicate is that this stage in women's lives is still considered less important, less equal, less deserving of respect, less part of mainstream society, and that gender-based discrimination in older age is less harmful or debilitating.

Looking ahead: the next 5 years

The accumulation of gender-based discrimination over a lifetime combined with the additional discrimination based on old age can have a devastating effect on women's lives unless it is explicitly addressed. The 1995 Beijing Platform for Action recommendations for action on older women's income security, health, property rights, access to non-discriminatory employment and on collecting data disaggregated by age and sex must be put into practice.

Gaps in the Beijing Platform for Action recommendations must also be addressed, inter alia, in relation to

- older women's enjoyment of human rights on an equal basis with others
- eliminating gender pay gaps throughout women's working lives, including in older age
- compensating unpaid care and other work that women do throughout their lives, including in older age
- preventing and providing redress for violence against women in their older age
- changing social norms that promote negative and degrading images of older women in the media
- tackling intersectional discrimination, particularly on the grounds of age and marital status
- addressing the impact of armed conflict and other situations of risk on older women
- ensuring older women's non-discriminatory access to services, including lifelong education and training, transport and financial services
- ensuring older women's participation in decision-making processes
- enabling older women to live autonomous lives of dignity and continued personal development whatever their physical or mental condition.

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Statement submitted by Hunger Project, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council*

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* The present statement is issued without formal editing.

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Please recycle

Statement

Beijing+20: Evaluating progress on the situation of indigenous women and highlighting future challenges

By: Enlace Continental de Mujeres Indígenas de las Américas

Land without monoculture or agrochemicals

The situation of indigenous people who have been stripped of their land is a pending issue. Forced evictions have drastic effects on indigenous women, who suffer rape, prostitution, trafficking in persons, grave health ramifications and larger overall workloads.

We are concerned about the promotion of development that gives no thought to the future by prioritizing monoculture and the use of agrochemicals, creating health problems and contaminating land and water. For instance, in the Chaco area in Argentina, hundreds of indigenous families are being affected by higher numbers of deformities among newborn babies and of cancerous diseases, as studies carried out by universities and environmental organizations have shown.

We call for the provisions of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (Convention No. 169 of the International Labour Organization) to be respected and brought into effect and urge countries to sign and ratify the Declaration if they have not yet done so.

We call for more information to be gathered on the negative impact of the extractive industries and the use of agrochemicals on the sexual and reproductive health of indigenous women.

We need more statistical data reflecting the types and conditions of employment of indigenous women in urban and rural areas to use as a basis for drafting national policies on land and housing. It is vital that such policies are designed from a territorial and collective perspective that includes the environment and Mother Earth.

Economic growth must be more harmonious, acknowledging the holistic framework of indigenous peoples for self-determined sustainable development, integrating approaches centred on human rights, ecosystems and land, and involving women as key players, recognizing their knowledge and their intrinsic relationship with the environment.

More education, interculturality and quality work

We welcome improved access to educational establishments for indigenous girls, adolescents and young women aged 6 to 22. However, statistics from Indigenous Women in Latin America: Demographic and Social Dynamics, a study produced by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) in 2013, show that rates of school attendance fall in correlation to an increase in age, exacerbating both ethnic and gender inequalities. The statistics also hide geographic inequalities between different peoples.

We call for guaranteed and quality Intercultural Bilingual Education (IBE) with a gender perspective, a wider scope of programmes, the involvement of indigenous women and peoples in its design, training for educators and rigorous assessment of its quality and impact.

Support for specific opportunities is needed so that indigenous young people can more easily access universities and enter the labour market under fair conditions and with full rights.

Sexual and reproductive rights and interculturality

According to data from Indigenous Women: New Protagonists for New Policies, a study produced by ECLAC in 2014, fertility rates among indigenous women have fallen but remain higher than those of non-indigenous women. Likewise, levels of early motherhood among indigenous girls have fallen in countries such as Brazil, Costa Rica, Mexico and Panama but not in Ecuador, where they have increased. Despite this progress, in countries such as Costa Rica, Panama and Brazil such levels are more than double those among their non-indigenous counterparts.

The gap between indigenous and non-indigenous women can be clearly seen in statistics for prenatal check-ups, attended deliveries in health centres and postnatal care, and is particularly wide in cases of maternal mortality. In Guatemala, maternal mortality among Mayan women is 211 per 100,000 live births, while among non-indigenous women it is 70 per 100,000 live births. In Panama, where the national rate is 71 deaths per 100,000 live births, in Ngöbe-Buglé *comarca* (county) there are 344 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births (ECLAC, 2014).

These statistics reflect, *inter alia*, weak institutional coverage, the lack of cultural adaptation, insufficient accessibility, lower quality and undervaluing by health-care workers of care practices in traditional culture, including the disregard for traditional midwifery practices in rural and indigenous communities.

We recommend that sexual and reproductive health programmes be created for indigenous girls and boys, adolescents and young people that are of intercultural relevance, go beyond biology by incorporating spiritual dimensions and indigenous world views, and rely on the participation and feedback of indigenous women and girls.

We urge systematic and culturally sensitive investigation, monitoring and evaluation of the HIV/AIDS epidemic among indigenous people and support for activities that promote access to tests for sexually transmitted infections among indigenous women and girls, who are highly vulnerable social groups among which an increase in the transmission of HIV/AIDS has been recorded. The figures recorded among the Awajún people in the Peruvian Amazon are alarming.

Violence

In recent years, indigenous women have contributed their own world views and day-to-day experience to the fight against violence in all its forms. That contribution is not reflected in the design of public policies, which lack a holistic, intercultural and context-specific approach and which address, alongside sexual violence, other areas and forms of expression such as structural violence, spiritual violence and

violence in armed conflict, which all have specific consequences for indigenous women.

In Canada, according to official statistics, indigenous women and girls are between five and seven times more likely than other women to die as a consequence of violence.

A number of factors make it difficult to clearly view or effectively tackle the violence suffered by indigenous women. The chronic lack of information is one of the main challenges. Added to this are the absence of an intercultural approach, the scarcity of services in rural areas far from care centres and laws that do not get to the heart of the problems of rural and indigenous communities or of their traditions, customs and values.

We would like to highlight the major challenge of setting up specific agencies and gathering further statistics and carrying out more investigations to tackle all forms of violence against indigenous women, combining a rights-based approach with gender and intercultural perspectives and including specific questions on ethnic self-identification in all sources of data on violence.

Exercising power and decision-making: greater presence

Progress in the political arena has been made in the Plurinational State of Bolivia, where 41 indigenous people, including 9 women, are among the total of 130 deputies in the Chamber of Deputies (for the period 2009-2015), and in Nicaragua, where 3 indigenous people, including 2 women, were among a total of 92 deputies in the National Assembly for the period 2006-2009 (ECLAC, 2013).

We note the recommendation by the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) that calls on States to adopt measures to increase the participation of indigenous women in government action and in decision-making structures at all levels and to guarantee equal access to government agencies, political parties, the administration of justice, trade unions and other bodies.

Support must be given to empower indigenous women, to strengthen their leadership skills and to facilitate their full participation in decision-making processes at all levels and their involvement in political, economic, social and cultural life.

Progress has been made and much of it is owed to the work and persistence of the indigenous women's movement with the support of entities of the United Nations system. In addition, during the last two decades, we have come together and worked with the broad and diverse women's movement, fighting common battles. Nevertheless, gaps between indigenous and non-indigenous women remain, and therefore specific measures need to be taken so that those gaps are eliminated once and for all.

We present UN Women with the challenge of creating a universal policy and programme for indigenous women for the seven geocultural regions of the world and of designing them with our participation and our input.

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Statement submitted by International Council of AIDS Service Organizations, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council*

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* The present statement is issued without formal editing.

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Please recycle

Statement

In 1995, the Beijing Platform for Action became the most progressive blueprint for advancing women's rights around the globe. Over the nearly two decades since its adoption, many countries have made great strides in advancing women's rights and ushering in a new era of women's empowerment. However, when reviewing progress made on improving women's health in general and maternal health in particular, the data paints a grim picture.

According to the World Health Organization, HIV infection and complications from pregnancy and childbirth are the two leading causes of death worldwide for women of reproductive age (15-44 years). Despite countless commitments to reduce gender inequalities, protect women's health and rights, ensure their meaningful involvement in decision-making related to HIV policy and programs, repeal laws and combat practices that stigmatize, discriminate or otherwise harm women and girls, women continue to bear the brunt of the HIV epidemic globally.

In 2011, the United Nations introduced the Global Plan to eliminate new HIV infections among children by 2015 and substantially reduce AIDS-related maternal deaths. While this concerted action has spurred laudable progress, according to a recent report by the Joint United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS entitled "Every Child Born HIV Free", only 67 per cent of all pregnant women living with HIV in low- and middle-income countries received medicine to preserve their health and prevent vertical transmission of HIV to their babies.

The International Council of AIDS Service Organizations, a non-governmental organization with roster consultative status, would like to emphasize the urgency of this crisis. It is unconscionable that young women, in the prime of their lives, are dying of preventable causes while the global community silently stands by. Through scientific progress, new tools and innovative approaches, we have it within our reach to end AIDS. However, this ambition will not be realized unless greater attention is paid to the systemic barriers that prevent women from accessing HIV prevention services and commodities, and for those living with HIV from accessing reproductive and maternal health services and adhering to drug regimens.

Stigma and discrimination are often cited as important barriers to access and effective utilization of HIV prevention, care and treatment services such as HIV testing, sero-status disclosure, retention in care and uptake of and adherence to antiretroviral therapy. Compounding the issue, the impact of HIV-related stigma on pregnant women living with HIV may be misidentified, misinterpreted or plainly, dismissed. When a pregnant woman living with HIV does not initiate services or is lost to treatment, this directly impacts the health of the woman and her unborn child. All of these issues are further exacerbated for women aged 15-24, who are approximately twice as likely as their male peers to be living with HIV, and adolescent females of lower socio-economic status are at even a higher risk of contracting HIV. Service providers and government officials responsible for the provision of services are often unable to articulate the reasons for low service uptake and any loss to treatment numbers and are therefore inept at implementing remedial actions.

The International Council of AIDS Service Organizations has documented how women's experience or perception of stigma and discrimination can impact health-seeking behaviours in the report "Stories of Stigma, Stories of Hope". Women living

with HIV contend with the fear of being stigmatized by their family, the community or in health-care settings, resulting in women not looking after their own health. This can manifest as avoiding clinics or not taking prescribed medication.

The women interviewed for the study recounted powerful stories of violence, abandonment and rejection from their intimate partners. Additionally, they described instances of differential treatment, breaches of confidentiality and in the most extreme cases, treatment that can only be characterized as cruel and inhumane from health care workers.

In a continued effort to address these disparities and ensure that we end AIDS within our lifetime without leaving anybody behind, the International Council of AIDS Service Organizations puts forth the following recommendations to address these challenges:

- National governments and the international community must ensure that laws and policies prohibiting discrimination on the basis of HIV status are enacted and implemented and mechanisms for reporting and remedying HIV-related discrimination that protect individuals from potential retaliation are established and used.
- National governments and the international community must ensure that national policies, plans and programs for the prevention of mother-to-child transmission are consistent with human rights principles and ethical requirements, including ensuring a supportive social, policy and legal framework for pregnant and breastfeeding women.
- National governments and the international community must ensure that sexual and reproductive health services and related maternal and child health services are integrated in prevention of mother-to-child transmission programs in order to provide comprehensive care for women living with HIV.

As a global community, we need to collectively ensure that all women, regardless of their HIV-status and the social, political and economic context of their lives, deserve the right to enjoy the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health and that their biology is not a barrier to the fulfilment of their human rights or their survival.

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Statement submitted by Indian Law Resource Centre and National Congress of American Indians, non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council*

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Please recycle

Statement

Violence against indigenous women and girls

Ending violence against indigenous women and girls is critical for the successful implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. The pursuit of gender equality and women's empowerment are "the driver for human rights, development, and peace." (E/CN.6/2014/CRP.3). Women's rights, including fundamental rights to life, security of the person, and to be free of violence and discrimination, are essential to the well-being of the woman, her family, community, country, and the world. For American Indian and Alaska Native women in the United States, protection of women's rights, especially those affecting safety, are inextricably connected to the existence and well-being of their tribes and nations.

The Beijing Platform for Action provides an agenda for "women's empowerment," defined as "removing all the obstacles to women's active participation in all spheres of public and private life. ..." The Platform identifies twelve critical areas of concern and calls on governments, the international community, and civil society to take action. Violence against women is one of those critical areas and is explicitly designated in the Platform as "an obstacle to the achievement of ... equality, development and peace."

Violence against women is a pervasive human rights violation across the globe, and the situation is particularly dire for indigenous women and girls. Strong action by the United Nations, member countries, and others is critically needed to end the pandemic of violence being inflicted on indigenous women and girls. A 2013 study prepared by the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues calls attention to this complex, cross-cutting issue that implicates individual human rights, women's and girls' specific human rights and indigenous peoples' collective rights (E/C.19/2013/9). Indigenous women and girls often suffer disproportionately heightened, multiple forms of discrimination, violence, and murder based not just on their gender, but also on the fact that they are indigenous and members of indigenous communities.

The situation for indigenous women and girls in the United States is no exception. One in three American Indian and Alaska Native women will be raped in her lifetime, and three in five will be physically assaulted. On some reservations, the murder rate for Native women is ten times the national average. Violence against American Indian and Alaska Native women and girls has reached epidemic levels on tribal lands and in Alaska Native villages — rates 2½ times higher than any other group of women in the United States. Alaska Native women are subjected to the highest rate of forcible sexual assault in the United States, with one in two Alaska Native women experiencing sexual or physical violence in her lifetime.

These disproportionately high rates of violence against American Indian and Alaska Native women are largely due to an unworkable, discriminatory legal system that severely limits the ability of Indian nations to protect Native women and girls from violence and fails to provide them with meaningful remedies and access to justice. The United States has taken affirmative steps forward to improve its laws by enacting legislation such as the Tribal Law and Order Act of 2010 to enhance tribal court sentencing authority, and the tribal provisions of the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013 to restore limited tribal criminal authority over certain

non-Indians that commit domestic violence, dating violence, or violate protection orders.

Nevertheless, significant legal barriers remain. Most Native women must wait for justice until the new tribal provisions become effective in March 2015. Even then, Indian nations must meet stringent requirements to use the new laws and this, coupled with the lack of sufficient funding for implementation, may delay, deter, or even prevent tribes from proceeding. Even where tribes do exercise the new jurisdiction, it is limited; tribes will still be unable to prosecute non-Indians who rape, murder, stalk, or traffic American Indian and Alaska Native women, and can only prosecute domestic violence if the non-Indian defendant has significant ties to the tribal community.

Perhaps the most egregious legal barrier is the one Alaska Native nations and women face. A "special rule" in the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013 excludes all but one of Alaska's 229 tribes from the law's increased protections and exacerbates an existing crisis — Alaska Native women and girls experience the highest levels of violence in the United States. Alaska Natives comprise only 15.2 per cent of the population in Alaska, yet they represent nearly 50 per cent of the domestic violence victims and 61 per cent of the sexual assault victims. In some Alaska Native villages, Alaska Native women report rates of domestic violence up to ten times higher than the rest of the country and physical assault victimization rates twelve times higher. By excluding 228 Alaska Native villages, United States law denies Alaska Native women equal protection under the law and treats them differently than other women in the United States, including other indigenous women.

During the 2014 United Nations World Conference on Indigenous Peoples, the General Assembly set forth key decisions in an Outcome Document to implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, including a commitment by states to intensify their "efforts, in cooperation with indigenous people, to prevent and eliminate all forms of violence and discrimination against indigenous peoples and individuals, in particular, women, children, youth, older persons and persons with disabilities, by strengthening legal, policy and institutional frameworks." (A/RES/69/2). Toward that end, states invited "the Commission on the Status of Women to consider the issue of the empowerment of indigenous women at a future session." We respectfully urge the Commission to consider the issue soon, preferably as a main focus during its 60th session, because violence against indigenous women and girls is a worldwide human rights crisis that cannot wait to be addressed. Systemic legal barriers separating and preventing safety and justice for indigenous women and girls must be removed. The time is now.

Challenges to gender equality and empowerment in the Millennium Development Goals and post-2015 development agenda

A critical challenge to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals is the omission of any goal or indicator on violence against women and girls, particularly indigenous women and girls. Collectively, the goals fall short of the Millennium Declaration's explicit commitment to human rights and "to combat all form of violence against women." Goal 3 promotes gender equality and empowerment of women; yet, the target for measuring achievement — eliminating gender disparity in education — is too restrictive. As recognized in the Beijing

Platform for Action, violence against women must be addressed in order to achieve equality, development, and peace.

The post-2015 development agenda must correct the oversights and shortcomings of the Millennium Development Goals. It must be a human rights-based agenda that recognizes the diversity of women and recognizes rights of women and children, especially indigenous women and children, to be free from violence. The Commission on the Status of Women has recognized that the self-reinforcing cycle of violence and poverty that women face is a serious impediment in reaching the Goals and achieving sustainable development. (E/CN.6/2014/L.7). The human rights framework called for in the Millennium Declaration and other international human rights instruments can best inform how countries fulfil their sustainable development obligations and measure their achievement with respect to women and girls.

In the Outcome Document of the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples, states committed "to giving due consideration to all the rights of indigenous peoples in the elaboration of the post-2015 development agenda." (A/RES/69/2). Article 22 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples directs that states pay particular attention to the rights and special needs of indigenous women and children in implementing the Declaration, and explicitly calls upon states, in conjunction with indigenous peoples, "to ensure indigenous women and children enjoy full protection and guarantees against all forms of violence and discrimination." (A/RES/61/295). We support consideration and integration of the human rights of women into all United Nations goals and activities, particularly the right of indigenous women and children to be protected against violence and discrimination.

Without direct and focused actions to end violence against women and girls, sustainable development could prove unattainable for indigenous peoples. The post-2015 development framework should ensure that goals and indicators are inclusive and reflect indigenous peoples' rights, including the human rights of indigenous women and girls to life, security, and to be free of violence and discrimination.

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Statement submitted by Institut Jules-Destrée, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council*

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Please recycle

Statement

The Fourth World Conference on Women, which took place in Beijing in September 1995, resulted in a Declaration and Platform for Action that continues to guide the research and work of women throughout the world. The concept of solidarity is present throughout the document, in particular with regard to combating the increase in poverty and the need to promote the advancement and empowerment of women in order to move forward into the future (p. 2); it provides solutions for economic growth and development (p. 9) and must be strengthened among women through information, education and sensitization activities (p. 83).

The Millennia2025 Solidarity-Women project aims to give women in vulnerable situations greater access to common goods in order to improve their daily life and, consequently, that of their children also. It is implemented by the Institut Jules-Destrée and the Millennia2025 Women and Innovation Foundation under the Millennia2015 plan of action for women's empowerment and gender equality, developed with the support of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

Multiple forms of inequality exist between men and women, including in relation to salaries, employment, rights, education, professional advancement and health. Violence against women and girls is one of the scourges of our society, owing to war, conflict, natural disasters, the economic situation and, unfortunately, the foolishness of men and sometimes of women.

Millennia2015 has applied a foresight methodology in its work since 2007 with a view to achieving its goal by 2025, because the situation is extremely urgent for women and girls, who are abused at all levels in too many countries and regions of the world. The vision is to set society in motion by using scientific tools to understand the past, analyse the present and build the future, optimizing opportunities to reach the objectives established. One of the strengths of that methodology is that it involves all stakeholders, from civil society to decision-makers, from research centres to companies. We have set up a large network of men and women who are concerned about women's empowerment and gender equality. Even in the countries and regions most affected by obscurantism, men are working alongside women to ensure equal rights. The Millennia2025 international network of voluntary researchers comprises 70 per cent women and 30 per cent men.

We have observed a trend among women in the analyses conducted for Millennia2015: they do not come across as victims but as fighters. They are emerging as leaders in their respective life contexts. They are putting all their energy into addressing their situation and building a better future, for themselves and for their children. Their will and creativity are an engine that gives us inspiration, and we wanted to contribute to their projects by giving them a voice.

Assessment of the strategic axes of Millennia2015 brought to light a fundamental concept: that of solidarity. As a result, Millennia2025 Solidarity-Women is structured as a model that can be replicated at the level of the European Commission, the francophone countries, the developing countries and the United Nations. One of the missions of Millennia2025 Solidarity-Women is to help its beneficiaries become the leaders of their own lives and step up their role in achieving empowerment. Financial assistance is therefore a short-term measure rather than a long-term objective. To achieve our goals, it is vital to generate a

citizens' solidarity fund that will enable the beneficiaries to obtain goods and services from suppliers at a discounted rate.

In order to gain more information on poverty, we are working on a comprehensive study on the situation of vulnerable women, with a view to documenting the Millennia2025 Solidarity-Women project. We call on all to contribute. The various parties involved in and interacting through the project are the suppliers of goods and services, the women beneficiaries, civil society and all stakeholders, including financial partners.

By "beneficiaries", we mean women in vulnerable situations:

- Single mothers (single-parent families) living below the poverty line;
- Poor female workers: part-time work that is not valued and does not enable the worker to escape poverty. Women are those most affected by this issue;
- Female jobseekers: there is striking inequality in access to employment. The rate of employment is much lower among women than it is among men;
- Women over 65 years of age: older persons, particularly women, face a relatively high risk of poverty;
- Migrant women: An increasing number of migrants are women. Furthermore, female migrants are subject to both cultural and gender-based stereotyping, which results in discrimination in employment; this in turn places them in a poor position in the job market, regardless of the qualifications they have obtained in their country of origin. This situation makes such women particularly vulnerable economically;
- Women with disabilities: with a particularly low average income, they suffer twofold discrimination, both as women and as persons with disabilities. They are forced to bear significant health-care costs, are restricted in their daily activities and are often confronted with an environment that is not adapted to their disability.

With regard to providers of goods and services, we have selected those whose services or resources are essential for everyday life but are not equally available to women in vulnerable situations (owing, among other things, to energy-related inequality and insecurity and health-related inequality):

- Electricity/gas: to guarantee access for women in vulnerable situations, particularly single mothers, so that they can manage their own daily life and that of their families;
- Water: to ensure access to water, a fundamental need for the well-being of single mothers and their families;
- Internet/telephone: to ensure that vulnerable women have access to the Internet and information technology so that they can more easily carry out administrative tasks, look for work and training, achieve social integration, ensure an education for their children, make contact with distant family members, access the outside world and access telemedicine in order to address their health problems;

- Companies supplying ergonomic equipment: to adapt the environment for women with disabilities and vulnerable older women by providing them with equipment for their care and well-being, at a discounted rate;
- Insurance companies: to establish solidarity-based contracts for the various forms of insurance required for the daily life of vulnerable women and their children;
- Mutual insurance schemes and social welfare centres: to help identify specific needs and structure a Millennia2025 solidarity fund for vulnerable women.

Millennia2025 Solidarity-Women has the following objectives:

- To increase women's access to high-quality socioeconomic activities that combine performance, efficiency, equity, sustainability and social responsibility. The same measures could be implemented in other public policy areas, again on the basis of the concept of providing access to common goods, including health care, mutual insurance schemes, banking services, information technology and the Internet, electricity, water, food and family-related purchases;
- To support women in vulnerable situations, to help them escape poverty and to empower them as leaders of their own future and that of their children;
- To generate educational competitiveness and the mobilization of citizens in solidarity in order to optimize family resources, empower women and ensure gender equality.

Online, we list a number of questions to help formulate recommendations, anticipate possible flaws or risks and build the project on a long-term basis, so that it can be reproduced in various countries or regions. Partners can interact at various levels in order to formalize our partnership arrangements. The project will be implemented from 2015 with our international partners under the leadership of the volunteer team steered by Marie-Anne Delahaut, Director of Research at the Institut Jules-Destrée and founding president and CEO of the Millennia2025 Women and Innovation Foundation, a registered charity based in Namur (Wallonia, Belgium).

We call for the involvement of UN-Women, the Commission on the Status of Women, member organizations and networks promoting women's empowerment and gender-equality, in order to mobilize partnerships that involve not only potential beneficiaries but also potential financial partners or sponsors and suppliers of goods and services. The support of political institutions and figures will help to firmly establish the project, thus making it possible to kick-start the process of improving the status of women in vulnerable situations and to move towards a change in attitudes, which is vital if women are to escape poverty. We are counting on your support!

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Statement submitted by Coalition against Trafficking in Women, Communications Coordination Committee for the United Nations, Coordinadora Española para el Lobby Europeo de Mujeres, Coordination française du lobby européen des femmes, Engender, Equality Now, European Women's Lobby, Federación Española de Mujeres Directivas, Ejecutivas, Profesionales y Empresarias, Federación de Mujeres Progresistas, Femmes solidaires, Forum for Women and Development, The Grail, International Alliance of Women, International Association of Applied Psychology, International Council of Women, International Federation of Business and Professional Women, Italian Association for Women in Development, Karat Coalition, National Alliance of Women's Organizations, National Council of Women of Malta, Netherlands Association of Women's Interests, Women's Work and Equal Citizenship, Network of East-West Women, Red ACTIVAS, Soroptimist International, Soroptimist International Great Britain and Ireland, Sveriges Kvinnolobby, Wales Assembly of Women, Women's World Summit Foundation, World Council for Psychotherapy, World Federation for Mental Health and World Federation of Ukrainian Women's Organizations, non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council*

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* The present statement is issued without formal editing.

14-66621 (E) 200115

Please recycle

Statement

Women and girls can't wait 20 more years to enjoy their full human rights!

Adopted two years after the Vienna World Conference on Human Rights, the Beijing Platform for Action brought to light the structural inequalities and human rights violations faced by all women and girls on the planet, and set the foundations for concrete action to realise de jure and de facto equality between women and men.

Twenty years later, much has been achieved, but much remains to be done. The European Women's Lobby report "From Words to Action" provides a picture of the situation of women and girls in Europe today, based on the collective assessment of its 2000 member organizations. While we should be celebrating the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, we know and see that women and girls still face inequality, violence, discrimination and insecurity, in all spheres of life and society.

Women and girls in Europe are now present in all spheres of society, from education to employment, in political and business decision making, expressing their views as artists, journalists, researchers, or community leaders. A new generation of young feminists is mobilising widely, using new communication technologies, dynamically tackling new and old forms of violations of their rights, and building global solidarity. Events and campaigns are taking place in different countries, giving life to a renewed women's social movement. Some men are engaging in the feminist movement, to support women's organizations' demands. Feminist economists are challenging the current system we live in, by proposing new ways of measuring well-being and protecting our planet and the next generations.

Despite this optimistic picture of a renewed feminism in Europe, women's rights are facing a stronger backlash than ever. Ultra-conservative and religious groups are systematically calling gender equality into question, by attacking women's sexual and reproductive rights, sexuality education, women's access to employment and decision-making. Some men's groups are getting media attention to their reactionary demands for patriarchal structures. The 2014 European elections brought more populist and misogynist European parliamentarians, directly threatening European Union policies for women's rights. The myth of "equality being already there" in Europe prevents gender equality from becoming a standalone goal for the European Union. The recent climate of austerity reinforces the idea that women's rights are "the icing on the cake". Financial cuts are threatening the very existence of women's organisations.

Additionally, the neoliberal system and the consumer society are impacting detrimentally on women's and girls' empowerment, by commodifying their body and sexuality and perpetuating gender stereotypes throughout all spheres of society. Stereotypes shape toys for boys and girls, influence girls' choices in education, prevent women from accessing some jobs, impact women's and girls' health, legitimise violence and everyday sexism, convey restrictive messages about women's role in society. We are worried to see that the cult of individualism has become so widespread that structural violations of women's rights are not taken seriously.

In 2015, women's organizations would expect all countries to take a step further and deliver new commitments to go beyond the Beijing Platform for Action. Instead, a growing profound and structural movement of antifeminist and ultraconservative ideas contest the goal of equality between women and men,

develop argumentation based on religion, tradition or culture to legitimate violations of women's rights, challenges universal human rights and the global solidarity for women's rights.

We call on all Member States to implement now the Beijing Platform for Action and to include the following demands of women's organizations in their Committee on the Status of Women and post-2015 commitments:

- Women's and girls' rights are universal goals, which cannot tolerate any exception, justification or excuse. Peaceful and sustainable development cannot be achieved if half the planet's population is not fully enjoying their human rights. We need a new paradigm for human rights: human rights are about a collective vision and solidarity, not tools to promote individualism. We call on all Member States to reaffirm their commitment to all interconnected and universal human rights, and systematically implement a women's rights perspective in their work.

- The current economic, political and social system has proven to be unsustainable, dangerous for the Planet, and unable to include and protect the most vulnerable, starting with women and girls. Women's and girls' views must be integrated in the global conversation on the major challenges that humanity is facing: climate change and biodiversity, poverty and redistribution, trade, food and land, water and energy, inequalities and violations of human rights, militarisation and conflicts, economic and financial governance... We call on all Member States to equally include women's organizations and experts in all global discussion on all issues.

- We need a shift in the values conveyed by our economic and financial systems: from profitability to well-being, from competition to solidarity, from inequality to transparency. The economy must serve the well-being of all, and not the other way around. In the current system, women's economic independence is not guaranteed. We are alarmed to see how the obsession of growth is prioritised over women's rights, and unreservedly condemn the European Union request to Member States to include prostitution in their national statistics. Investing in women's rights is the most urgent and smart action to protect the planet and see future generations equal, empowered, living in peace and dignity. Feminist economists are an inspiration for a radical new vision for people and planet, including of the care economy. The women's movement is allying with other social movements to propose alternatives based on rights, solidarity and equality. We call on all Member States to deliver a new model for development and peace, with women's and girls' rights and feminist economics and values at its core.

- Everywhere in the world, including Europe, women human rights' defenders are being threatened and attacked. Grassroots action by women's organizations makes a real change at all levels of personal life, community and society. We cannot accept the dismantling of civil society. We call on all Member States to abide by their duty to develop democratic societies and civil dialogue, support women's organizations and protect all human rights activists.

- Women are not a homogenous group and have multiple identities. This diversity is what makes our societies so interesting and creative. But living in systems where racism, sexism and classism are still prevalent, women with

multiple identities are rendered more vulnerable to discrimination, violence and violation of their rights. The situation of migrant or undocumented women, women from ethnic minorities, indigenous women, Roma women, women with disabilities, rural women, girls, older women, lesbians and bisexual women, transgender women, has long been made invisible. We call on all Member States to make sure that all policies are designed to not leave a single girl or woman behind.

- The prevalence and persistence of gender stereotypes show that the shift of mentalities remains the highest challenge for the realisation of women's rights. Legislation should be accompanied by political will to keep women's rights on the highest level of the political agenda, at all times. We call on all Member States to elaborate comprehensive and ambitious strategies to realise women's and girls' rights, which should not only develop and implement legislation, but also make a concrete change in mentalities and values.

- Ending all forms of violence against women and girls should be a priority: there won't be peace as long as women or girls live in fear of violence. There can be no excuse, custom, tradition, or religious consideration used to violate women's rights and legitimise male violence. Violence against women cannot be considered a private issue; it is a human rights issue. We call on all Member States to reiterate their commitment to end all forms of violence against women and girls.

- We call on the United Nations and the Member States to reaffirm their commitment to existing United Nations agreed language and instruments on women's rights and empowerment. We condemn the trivialisation of prostitution as 'work' by some United Nations agencies and reports, which renders invisible the structural harm of the prostitution system and its links with human trafficking; we call on Member States to reaffirm their commitment to the United Nations 1949 New York Convention. We want to see strong international commitment to guarantee and promote women's and girls' sexual and reproductive health and rights, at a time of commemoration of the 20th anniversary of the Cairo Programme of Action. We condemn attacks on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender/Transexual and Intersexed persons and want to see ~ recognition of the diversity of families and relationships.

The European Union and its Member States are at a political turning point: they must choose to lead the way towards a gender equal future. Investing in women's rights is the core commitment for a more sustainable, democratic and inclusive world to evolve. The nomination of a Commissioner for Gender Equality is an opportunity to put women's rights at the centre of European politics; we call on her to build on the recommendations outlined in European Women's Lobby Beijing+20 report to develop an ambitious new strategy for all women and girls in Europe to enjoy their full human rights. We call on all European Union Member States to strengthen their institutional mechanisms and commitments for women's and girls' rights.

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Statement submitted by African Action on AIDS, Associated Country Women of the World, European Union of Women, Federation of American Women's Clubs Overseas, Hadassah: Women's Zionist Organization of America, International Alliance of Women, International Association of Democratic Lawyers, International Council of Jewish Women, International Council of Psychologists, International Council of Women, International Federation for Home Economics, International Federation of Social Workers, International Federation of University Women, International Inner Wheel, Pan Pacific and South-East Asia Women's Association of Thailand, Pax Romana, Servas International, Socialist International Women, Soroptimist International, Women's Federation for World Peace International, Women's International Zionist Organization and Zonta International, non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council*

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* The present statement is issued without formal editing.

14-66622 (E) 200115

Please recycle

Statement

We the undersigned international and national non-governmental organisations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, members of the Vienna Non-Governmental Organization Committee on the Status of Women, present for the information of and consideration by the participants of the 59th session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women the following statement on the Theme BEIJING + 20:

After the Second World War, when the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights were adopted. the primary goal was to create a world where people could be free from war and free from fear.

Seventy years later and 20 years after the Fourth World Conference on Women, in the year the Millennium Development Goals should be reached, we are still far from reaching this goal, a goal which should be achieved for all human beings.

The Sustainable Development Goals for our planet must be based on Human Rights, equality, in particular gender equality, and access to education for all.

The greatest threats to sustainable development are war and armed conflicts, as they result in destruction and losses for everyone involved.

Women suffer the most in war and armed conflict, as they are subject to both systemic violence based on religious fundamentalism and ethnic discrimination and violence based on the outdated concept of women as the property of men, leading to rape and murder of women and girls as a means to humiliate the enemy.

Even in non-conflict societies, violence against women of all ages, including gender-related killing, must be ranked as the most important issue affecting women and girls globally. We urge the Member States to:

- use all possible constructive means, first and foremost diplomacy, to end armed conflicts and begin peace processes involving all stakeholders, both women and men, according to Security Council Resolution 1325 and the following Security Council Resolutions concerning the Women, Peace, Security agenda;
- ensure that refugees, in particular women and girls, are protected during their flight and in refugee camps, which should be safe and secure places for all;
- take all necessary steps to ensure that gender-based violence — specifically rape — is never used as tool of war, and that women and girls in conflict-affected areas are fully protected;
- implement the Beijing Platform for Action without delay;
- ensure a Stand-Alone Goal for Gender Equality in the Post 2015 Agenda;
- work to achieve real gender equality in all parts of the world as the basis for sustainable development and democracy;
- support human rights as individual and universal rights everywhere and for everyone;

- provide education for all — boys and girls, women and men — from primary to university level and lifelong, as education is the paramount tool to empower people; provide equal chances to all and achieve sustainable development;
- call on parents, educators, administrators, law and policy makers to increase the level of non-discriminatory education for all in order to support women and girls to have access to decision making positions;
- establish and utilize robust systems to collect reliable data and statistics, disaggregated by sex and age, to allow monitoring and evaluation of all indicators and targets agreed for the Post 2015 Agenda, so that all stakeholders can work more effectively to achieve gender equality.

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Statement submitted by Interregional Union of Life Help for Mentally Handicapped Persons "Sail of Hope", a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council*

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* The present statement is issued without formal editing.

14-66624 (E) 060215

Please recycle

Statement

In this world, stability is determined by a balance of power, desires and actual possibilities. The socioeconomic development of any State depends on maintaining a balance between security and protection of the rights of all citizens in society, without exception. Absolutely all categories of persons require social justice: children, disabled persons, pensioners, and women and adolescents.

Social justice for the population is manifested by protecting the interests of vulnerable groups, particularly women and adolescent girls. The State's priorities are not confined to ongoing protection of the interests of the female half of the human race. The authorities are, above all, obliged to guarantee women's rights and take full responsibility for social and creative fulfilment for the largest possible proportion of the female population of the world.

The job of civil society is to keep a check on this process, to promote wider enjoyment of women's rights and creative potential and to devote its combined efforts to eradicating poverty and raising the population's standard of living, creating the conditions for the integration into society of vulnerable and disadvantaged population groups and creating full employment and a decent life for all, consistent with the work contribution and the needs of the world population.

The adoption of modern standards and laws at State and global level for the guarantee and promotion of the rights and potential of the female population; strict monitoring of the observance of approved rules and standards; the creation of well-paid, fairly paid, high-quality jobs; safe working conditions; increased social protection; promotion of international social norms; a strengthened social dialogue; and other measures – these will all contribute greatly to protection of the interests of women and continual improvement of the standard of living of the world population as a whole. However, in order to reduce poverty, defuse social tensions and achieve a sustained reduction in mass unemployment there will be a need for growth in the real economy, innovations in engineering, an industrial revolution, financial investment and the creation of new jobs in all sectors. This is the only approach which will dispel the emotional irritants in society and create a favourable environment both within the State and internationally. This is essential for social integration and cooperation, for observance of the guarantees and conditions for decent work, and for the highest possible level of employment among the world's working population, including women.

The following are all priority tasks of modern society: the eradication of violence against women and girls, including rigorous agreements on the promotion of gender equality; increased possibilities for women and a guarantee of their reproductive rights; access to reproductive health services; accessible, affordable health services, including emergency contraception for victims of violence; the timely resolution of all health consequences of violence, including physical, mental, sexual and reproductive health issues; the resolution of issues of violence against women and girls; the provision of accessible health services for them, including safe, effective and high-quality medicinal products, timely support for the treatment of injuries, psychological and mental-health support, emergency contraception, safe abortion services where these are permitted under national law, post-exposure prophylaxis against HIV infection; diagnosis and treatment of sexually transmitted infections (STI); training and continuing professional development for health

professionals for effective identification of and support for women victims of violence; and provision of legal advice by appropriately trained professionals.

The statement issued by United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon offers the hope of a bright future: "Violence against women is a heinous human rights violation, global menace, a public health threat and a moral outrage. No matter where she lives, no matter what her culture, no matter what her society, every woman and girl is entitled to live free of fear. She has the universal human right to be free from all forms of violence so as to fulfil her full potential and dreams for the future."

Our organization supports the principles and actions laid down in the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and appeals to all humanitarian inhabitants of the world to observe ethical standards in their relationships with others in order to build a creative society!

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Statement submitted by Anglican Consultative Council, Association of Presbyterian Women of Aoteaora (New Zealand), Church Women United, Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America, Lutheran World Federation, Presbyterian Church USA, Salvation Army, Society of Catholic Medical Missionaries, United Church of Christ Board for World Ministries, Women's Division of the General Board of Global Ministries of the United Methodist Church, Women's Missionary Society of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, World Federation of Methodist and Uniting Church Women and World Young Women's Christian Association, non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council*

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* The present statement is issued without formal editing.

14-66625 (E) 200115

Please recycle

Statement

Ecumenical Women, a coalition of Christian denominations and organizations, welcome the review of the Beijing Platform for Action at the 59th session of the Commission on the Status of Women. We affirm the promotion of gender equality, development and peace as fundamental to realizing women's human rights, as declared in the Beijing Platform for Action, Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women, Security Council Resolution 1325 and other international agreements.

We condemn oppression, violence and women's exclusion from political and social processes using religious beliefs to legitimize such practices in conjunction with political interests.

The state has the primary responsibility to prevent violence and discrimination and to promote and protect the economic and social human rights of women and their families. As churches and faith-based organizations, we also play a role through advocacy and education.

Progress has been made since the first world conference on women in 1975 and there have been important steps towards gender equality. More women now have access to education and health care. Rape and violence against women is now globally understood as a crime.

Despite the twenty years of national and international agreements to advance women's rights, many of the goals of the Beijing Platform for Action remain unfulfilled. Gender biased institutional structures create inequalities and discrimination, and still exist in public and private sectors, academia, and religious structures. We are concerned with the lack of full implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the efforts to roll back gains.

In this year of assessment, 20 years after the Beijing Platform for Action, Ecumenical Women highlights the following themes that require action by all states to advance women's human rights:

Violence and discrimination against women

The Beijing Platform for Action and Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women state that gender based violence and violence against women and girls are gross violations of human rights. Gender discrimination, cultural, structural and economic factors are underlying root causes of violence that demean the dignity of women and girls. Lack of equality in education, unequal pay for equal work, sexual harassment, human trafficking, higher health care costs, lack of access to services and inheritance laws are just a few examples of this inequality.

The endemic culture of legal impunity for crimes is a barrier to addressing violence against women and girls. Local authorities and justice systems often fail to prosecute offenders. Survivors of violence lack sufficient care and protection. Maintaining a system of male domination, linked to racism and class inequality, perpetuates discrimination and violence against women. Sexual violence in contexts of militarism and of conflict involving State or non-state actors persists and is

destructive of communities. States that bear primary responsibility to protect women and girls from violence are often perpetrating violence through militarism.

Gender equity awareness and engaging men and boys in this work are critical in changing societal and individual behaviours. Peace and non-violence education should be taught at all levels.

We therefore appeal urgently to Member States to:

- Fully implement the Beijing Platform for Action and other relevant international agreements such as the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women, the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, ensure discrimination and gender biases are eliminated in local and national laws, policies and customs;
- Protect women's rights by eradicating unlawful and harmful practices that perpetuate violence against women, and implement Security Council resolution 1325 and subsequent related resolutions;
- Ensure perpetrators of violence against women and girls are prosecuted, judicial and criminal systems are reformed, reparations and counselling are provided for victims of violence, clear sexual harassment policies in all institutions of society are created, and gender education and training for police and judges on all levels are conducted;
- Create awareness and education programs that will mobilize participation of men and boys as partners to address violence against women and girls, including in armed forces.

Poverty, inequalities and climate change

Although efforts have been made to combat poverty, especially after the formulation of the Millennium Development Goals, the gap between the wealthiest and the poorest is increasing. Poverty is persistent and a burden on women and girls, the elderly and people with disabilities, rooted in structural inequality and gender and race- based discrimination. Transformative policies and people-centred development that deliver essential economic and social rights for all are necessary to achieve true equality between women and men as well as across race, ethnicity, national status, class and other structures of domination.

Women and girls are among those most affected by climate change, which threatens their lives and livelihoods. Climate change is a direct threat to peace and development. Poor communities are often the first and hardest affected by climate change. A holistic approach to development, with climate mitigation and adaptation, is necessary to reduce climate change-related disruptions.

We urge Member States to:

- Put in place mechanisms that ensure the participation of civil society organizations in the planning processes of national development plans and budgeting and ensure women's representation in such spaces;

- Design emergency interventions to cope with climate change disasters that have a gender perspective and an inclusive approach to meet the special needs of women, girls, elderly and people with disabilities;
- Strengthen global regulatory frameworks to ensure adherence to human rights, labour standards and environmental agreements by international institutions, governments and corporations;
- Implement pro-poor and gender-sensitive measures that ensure equitable access to productive resources, including land and sea;
- Remove legal and other obstacles to women's ownership of land, inheritance and equal access to loans, social security and pensions;
- Ensure full, decent employment for women including equal pay for equal work both formal and informal;
- Reallocate resources used for war and militarism to mitigate climate change, implementing the standards established in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Education and training of women and girls

Education, which epitomizes the indivisibility and interdependence of all human rights is key for redressing gender injustice in society and for overcoming social and cultural norms that discriminate against girls, especially in terms of access to opportunities.

Systemic barriers, cultural and social beliefs and practices, violence, as well as cost prevent girls and women from benefiting from educational opportunities to the same extent as their male counterparts. Child, early and forced marriages and lack of safety result in girls dropping out of school. Enduring obstacles to access are rooted in education policies, which tend to focus on formal schooling with little attention paid to building literacy and marketable skills.

We urge Member States to:

- Remove economic and other barriers to women's educational success; support and increase public spending for education of women; create incentive programs to encourage girls' participation in secondary education;
- Promote educational models that equip women to assume positions of leadership and decision-making;
- Initiate programs that encourage men and boys to adopt new approaches toward women and girls and value their contributions.

Women and health — full access to reproductive health and informed decision-making

Women's control over their bodies and their reproductive health continues to be denied or limited. Women are often prevented from obtaining treatment due to poverty, geography, weak health systems or discrimination. HIV-positive women, women with disabilities, older women, migrant women, poor women, ethnic and

other racially oppressed women, women in situations of military occupation and other contexts often face a greater degree of discrimination when trying to obtain treatment and access to health services, particularly sexual and reproductive health services.

Women often have less status and access to health care and economic security than men. War and conflict undermine or destroy efforts to build national women's health infrastructure, as do economic austerity programs and privatization schemes.

A gender-sensitive response to the health care needs of women must confront the changing social, cultural and economic factors that put women and girls at risk. Investment in women and girls is needed, with adequate funds to organizations that reach women and girls.

We ask Member States to:

- Affirm the right of women and men, especially young people, to have access to comprehensive sexual reproductive health education and services;
- Reverse trends to privatize public health systems and fully fund women's health infrastructure, including reproductive health services;
- Emphasize and respond to the growing feminization of HIV/AIDS and provide full access to health services and medicine;
- Promote closer partnerships with civil society, faith-based organizations and the United Nations in order to increase the capacity for care and support;
- Provide full access to health care for all women and girls.

We affirm that God's world was meant to be one of abundance for all people, with fundamental rights and dignity for all women and men. For healthy sustainable societies, women must be integral to the decision-making processes in law, policies and development programs. Women are needed at the centre of post 2015 development agenda.

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Statement submitted by the Marangopoulos Foundation for Human Rights, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council*

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* The present statement is issued without formal editing.

14-66627 (E) 060215

Please recycle

Statement

Contemporary dangers of withdrawing or eroding the protection of human rights, in particular women's rights, by insidious and undemocratic methods

A battle has been waged for some time now to undermine a principle which, having always been applied implicitly, was ultimately enshrined in the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action of 1993 (Chapter I, paragraph 5, and Chapter II, paragraph 38) and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action of 1995 (paragraphs 9, 230(g) and 232(g)), whereby traditions and practices that were contrary to the contemporary norms and principles of international law relating to gender equality in all areas and without discrimination should be rejected.

The Marangopoulos Foundation for Human Rights reacted against that insidious battle, which was particularly apparent in 2010 when the French Council of State issued a negative opinion in response to the proposal by the French Government to prohibit the burka. The President of our Foundation, Ms. Alice Yotopoulos-Marangopoulos, sent a letter to the members of the French National Assembly supporting the bill and refuting the argument put forward by the Council of State. The bill was passed and declared by the Constitutional Council to be in accordance with the French Constitution. More recently, on 1 July 2014, the Grand Chamber of the European Court of Human Rights declared it to be in accordance with the European Convention on Human Rights (*S.A.S. v. France*, in particular paragraph 106 et seq.). The law prohibits the wearing, in both open and closed public places, of clothing designed to hide the face and identity of the woman, thereby undermining her right to respect and her opportunity to earn a living, and therefore her independence. The argument put forward by advocates of the burka, according to which the ban violates the free will of the woman, is entirely unfounded.

Indeed, there can be no free will if a woman who does not obey her "master" risks subjecting herself to ill treatment or even, in certain societies, being rejected as a result. In such cases, and taking into account the fact that women enjoy neither inheritance rights nor the right to engage in paid employment in order to support themselves, the only remaining option is to earn one's living though prostitution. Can that really be described as freedom? Furthermore, it should be acknowledged that, in other cases of human rights violations, even the will of the perpetrators is not free. For example, men in certain closed societies who have a "moral" obligation to punish so-called "honour" crimes committed by women are not acting of their own free will, since they are fully aware that the act of killing their wife, daughter or sister will result in imprisonment. Of course, they try to evade punishment by all possible means, which is why the youngest male member of the family is often given the responsibility of fulfilling that inhumane "duty".

In order to eradicate such forms of discrimination, we consider that the following measures should be taken. Firstly, women should receive, from childhood, an education that will allow them to gain practical knowledge so as to be able to engage in an occupation and gain independence.

In addition, the largest possible number of women's organizations that support the positions set out above should rally together to take action. Women will be more

easily convinced if they are made aware of such standpoints by others like them, in particular women from their own societies. It would also be very useful to establish men's organizations that have the same aims and follow the same principles and that work specifically with men to change their discriminatory behaviour towards women.

Furthermore, large international organizations, notably United Nations agencies that are competent in human rights issues, should push societies towards that goal, since they are the principal actors responsible for promoting the principles and rules of international law relating to the exercise of human rights without discrimination. More specifically, the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women should play a leading role in that struggle. The requirement for a "consensus" in order to reach decisions, not only in the Commission but also in other competent and relevant international bodies, is an arbitrary practice that undermines that inherent logic of democracy itself, whereby the majority prevails. The consensus requirement in fact entitles a single dissident to impose his or her views on everyone else! In other words, the minority view is imposed on the majority, which leads to the suppression of the fundamental principle of democracy.

Lastly, all other undemocratic practices must be abolished, such as the hypocritical protection by medical staff of the "health" of young girls who are subjected to genital mutilation. Let us not be fooled – female genital mutilation is not only a question of physical health and integrity, but also leads to a loss of sexual gratification and constitutes a violation of psychological integrity. We must also accelerate the eradication of forced marriages, which in reality constitute the sale of young girls by their own families, usually to much older men. Advocates of that inhumane practice cite their so-called respect for religious beliefs and rules, which are, however, fundamentally opposed to international human rights law and, more specifically, to article 23 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

We all have a duty to respond to such practices, which are contrary to the fundamental principles of international law relating to effective equality and democracy. We must not collaborate, either actively or as passive observers, in the suppression of the fundamental principles of international law that establish the supremacy of democracy, liberty and all human rights, without discrimination. Those principles were recognized after centuries of harsh and bloody conflict. Their suppression would constitute a veritable crime that should be recognized and punished as such under international law. Fortunately, racist acts are already criminalized at the national level; other human rights breaches must also be criminalized, including the violation of gender equality by any means.

The United Nations Commission on the Status of Women must continue to resist any pressure that could lead to the deterioration of women's rights. It must take all necessary measures to ensure, on the one hand, the supremacy of human rights over any practice or custom that contradicts those rights and to strengthen, on the other hand, the effective implementation of relevant rules and principles.

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Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century"

Statement submitted by Organisation mondiale des associations pour l'éducation prénatale, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council*

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* The present statement is issued without formal editing.

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Please recycle

Statement

In recent decades, science (medicine, biology, genetics, psychology) has proven that the prenatal period of life is fundamental to human development; during that period, the human embryo forms the basic structures of its organs, systems and bodily functions and the foundation for health, emotional well-being, psychological balance, social skills, intelligence and creativity.

According to the scientific information established in international literature, life begins at conception; it is scientifically acknowledged that from the moment the first cell divides, the person exists as an individual consciousness, separate from his/her mother. He/she has senses and feelings of love and fear and can formulate thoughts, which are all induced and activated by the parents' everyday life and environment. Everything the mother experiences, the child experiences with her.

The healthy life of an informed mother who avoids stress, anxiety and conflict, keeps calm and maintains a balance in her sensations, thoughts and emotions contributes to the child's development. Furthermore, all this provides the child with information that is saved in his/her cellular memory and contributes to the expression of his/her genetic makeup, later expressed as character traits.

During the nine-month gestation period, mother and child experience complete union and the mother plays an educative role that will determine the entire life of her child, and the adult that child will become.

During that period, mothers and fathers at their side are very powerful educators as they are involved in the formation of the child's entire physiology, notably the brain. They will never have as much power once the child is born.

When the English biologist Frederic Truby King was asked by British politicians, "How can we improve the health of the people?" he replied:

> "Focus on the nine months preceding and the nine months following birth" (Geoffrey Hodson, *The Miracle of Birth*).

According to the American geneticist Professor Bruce Lipton, the Canadian professor Thomas Verny and several others, "Future parents, in particular mothers, are veritable genetic engineers. They are the first very powerful educators. This is something they urgently need to know."

The World Organization of Prenatal Education Associations and the 24 associations comprising it consider that preventive measures can really change humanity or human beings at a basic level – the first preventive action is to focus on the roots of life. To give human beings in the early stages of life an education that will create peaceful, loving individuals that respect themselves and others.

That is how we can transform today's world, in which war, crime and violence on the one hand, and poverty, humiliation and economic crisis on the other, are so prevalent in all countries.

According to the report of the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 4-15 September 1995, United Nations, New York, 1996), it is vital to:

> Promote people-centred sustainable development, including sustained economic growth, through the provision of basic education, life-long education and primary health care for women and girls;

> Ensure equal access to education and health care and the equal treatment of women and men, and enhance sexual and reproductive health;
>
> Create the conditions that will enable girls and women of all ages to realize their full potential and ensure their full and equal participation in the construction of a better world for all;
>
> Women play a critical role in the family. The family is the basic unit of society and as such should be strengthened. It should receive comprehensive protection and support. Families exist in various forms, depending on cultural, political and social systems. The contribution made by women to the welfare of the family and the development of society is not yet acknowledged. We must recognize the social significance of motherhood and the role of parents within the family and for children's upbringing. The responsibilities involved in bringing up children must be shared between parents, women and men, and society as a whole (Appendix II, OBJECTIVES).

According to the report, the international community must:

> Demonstrate its renewed will to prepare for the future – to promote a world in which every child can flourish freely;
>
> Strengthen prevention programmes to improve women's health. Education is a human right and an essential tool for achieving the goals of equality, development and peace;
>
> Reinforce laws, reform institutions and promote relevant norms and practices, in order to encourage both men and women to take responsibility for their sexual and reproductive behaviour;
>
> Give priority to both formal and informal educational programmes that enable women to develop self-esteem and acquire knowledge;
>
> Recognize the specific needs of young people and implement appropriate education and information programmes on sexual and reproductive health issues;
>
> Prepare and disseminate available information so that men and women, in particular young people, are better informed about their health, notably with regard to sexuality and reproduction, taking into account the rights of the child.

Strategic objectives and measures to be taken

The session on education conducted in Geneva by the United Nations Economic and Social Council in July 2011 concluded that education was vital to the future of humanity and that school curricula should be enhanced by introducing teaching and principles that would prepare young people for life.

Indeed, we provide students with knowledge that is often less important, but they receive no education to prepare them for parenthood. Meanwhile, modern scientific developments (in biology, genetics, epigenetics and psychology) have produced the important knowledge discussed above, which indicates that the first stage of life – the prenatal period, the first living environment – creates the foundations for the human being.

The sharp increase in birth rate is problematic and, according to specialists, the knowledge gap discussed above leads to an increase in aggression and crime. The study of parenting, which was taught by Pythagoras and Plato and applied to the Thesmophoria initiation rites, was the key to and the cause of the flourishing of ancient Greek culture.

It would be useful for young people to gain this new knowledge (as well as existing knowledge) on the transmission of human life and their future role as parents under the supervision of teachers in a school environment.

We propose:

The addition of the following paragraph to article 29, paragraph 1, between subparagraphs (d) and (e), of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child: "The inclusion in school curricula of studies that prepare young people for parenthood, in order to provide students with appropriate scientific information (in biology, epigenetics and prenatal psychology) on developing life and their role as the founders of future families."

We also propose the addition of the following to article 24 of the Convention: "The provision to couples, particularly mothers, of information on their fundamental role during the prenatal period of their child's life. The provision, by means of legislative and administrative measures, of the information and protection required for the optimum fulfilment of that role."

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Statement submitted by American Association of University Women, Armenian Relief Society, Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, Dominican Leadership Conference, End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and Trafficking of Children for Sexual Purposes, Feminist Majority Foundation, Girls Learn International, The Grail, International Confederation of Midwives, International Council of Jewish Women, International Federation of Business and Professional Women, International Humanist and Ethical Union, International Lactation Consultant Association, International Presentation Association of the Sisters of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, International Union for Health Education, National Council of Women of the United States, Pan Pacific and South-East Asia Women's Association, Passionists International, Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary, Salvation Army, School Sisters of Notre Dame, Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, Society of Catholic Medical Missionaries, Soroptimist International, To Love Children Educational Foundation International, World Federation for Mental Health, World ORT Union and World Young Women's Christian Association, non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council*

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

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Please recycle

Statement

The Working Group on Girls is a coalition of over 80 national and international non-governmental organizations with representation at the United Nations dedicated to promoting the human rights of girls in all areas and stages of life, advancing their status and inclusion, and recognizing and developing their full potential and capabilities as partners in action.

We applaud the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, especially in its emphasis on the rights of the Girl Child, and for establishing the framework for advancing "the goals of equality, development and peace for all women everywhere in the interest of humanity." We agree now, nearly 20 years later, that this task continues to "require urgent action in the spirit of determination, hope, cooperation and solidarity."

We affirm the Agreed Conclusions of the Commission on the Status of Women 58, particularly the call for a comprehensive approach to achieving gender equality, women's and girls' empowerment, and the human rights of all women and girls, through a stand-alone goal, to be integrated through targets and indicators to all goals, as essential to the post-2015 development framework.

We urge the rejection of all forms of violence and harmful practices against women and girls: sex selection, female infanticide, female genital mutilation, early, child and forced marriage, honour killings, rape — all forms of violence in all spheres, domestic and public. We have special concern for the vulnerability of girls with regards to sexual exploitation, both in the media, and more explicitly through human trafficking, the nature of which is changing and exacerbated with increased economic stress and high levels of poverty, in addition to more dispersed venues for exploitation.

We uphold the human rights of girls in all phases of the life cycle and the promotion and development of their full potential and self-determination in all aspects of daily life, from the right to universal birth registration, the provision of quality health services, education from primary to tertiary, the right to safety and freedom from violence, the opportunity to achieve economic stability and independence through productive employment and access to financial resources, and the provision of social protections to ensure economic security. We reject all forms of discrimination outlined in the Convention to Eliminate Discrimination against Women, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and the ongoing work of the Commission on the Status of Women.

We recognize that changing deep cultural attitudes requires a multi-dimensional approach and dedicated supports in public and private sectors. It also requires the meaningful commitment to dialogue and action — women and men, girls and boys, families and communities together — in addition to institutional commitments and support. The Beijing Platform stressed the importance of educating families re: the importance of respecting and empowering girls to achieve their full potential and ending harmful practices that affect their health and psycho-social, spiritual, educational and economic well-being and development. It stressed the need to uphold girls' rights as fundamental human rights. Grassroots efforts aimed at helping communities understand these rights and the detrimental effects of discrimination and harmful practices on the overall development and advancement of girls have been successful in many instances and need continued sport.

We have deep concern that the feminization of poverty persists and was insufficiently addressed in the Millennium Development Goals. Women and girls are often reliant on an informal economy or left to engage in the unpaid work of family care. Girls carry an inordinate share of domestic tasks, which (in addition to lack of safe travel and inadequate sanitation facilities), curtails their attendance in school at an early age, and further limits their prospects of obtaining the skills necessary for decent employment. In regions that continue to have high rates of extreme poverty, and/or high rates of vulnerable or no employment, women and girls also have little or no social protections. Data consistently indicates that a higher number of women than men experience this insecurity. The right to education, vocational training, decent employment, land ownership, inheritance, financial resources/decision-making, and the implementation of social protection systems is vitally necessary to support women's and girls' economic security. Likewise, equal sharing of family care roles and the creation of social institutions and services to support families, are essential.

Special attention to domestic workers is also needed, many of whom are teens who migrate for employment in order to support themselves and/or their families. These girls are extremely vulnerable to being trafficked, or without protection from unfair and exploitive employer practices and often imposed isolation from the community.

In the area of girls' health, strong political will and the commitment to training and resources is needed to reverse both child and maternal mortality rates. Most of these deaths are considered preventable, and critical strategies include increased prenatal care and delivery with the assistance of a skilled health attendant. We urge Post-2015 efforts be intensified to utilize these strategies to reach all women and girls, especially those living in poverty and most vulnerable in Sub-Saharan Africa and Southern Asia, which carry the highest burden in both child and maternal mortality. We also note reports that adolescent childbearing remains high, and this brings increased health risks for girls (as well as missed education and work opportunities). Likewise, risky sexual behaviour among adolescents and young adults also remains high, necessitating further development of quality programs of integral sexual education, working with families and communities for support. This is particularly important with regards to HIV/AIDS infection, as adolescent girls and young women are particularly vulnerable to infection, and will also often face stigma, discrimination, and violence as a result. Millennium Development Goals data indicate that the number of women living with HIV has been increasing steadily since 2001.

Girls' voices must be represented in all areas of civic life: education, employment, health, safety, economics, technology, the environment, and peace building in order to achieve equality, empowerment and guarantee of their human rights. They must be able to participate in all levels of decision-making, planning, and problem-solving in all spheres to ensure that gender perspectives are incorporated into all areas of development. They are especially vital to the development of Peace and Security, particularly in areas of high conflict or disaster, and in refugee resettlements where girls are most vulnerable. We also affirm their contributions to the peace movement and their efforts to promote international cooperation towards the reduction of nuclear arms. We urge that the inclusion of such efforts be reinstated in the post-2015 framework for sustainable development.

We urge Member States to take immediate and effective measures to secure and eliminate the worst forms of child labour as defined in the International Labor Organization Convention, Article 4, and to end child labour in all its forms, including recruitment and use of child soldiers.

Girls are critical yet overlooked partners in development who cannot be left behind. Without their voices and meaningful participation, without the political will and commitment of resources to end all violence and discrimination against them and promote equal opportunities for their advancement, there can be no real sustainable development. We urge that the human rights and empowerment of all girls, everywhere, be integrated throughout all targets and indicators of the post-2015 framework to ensure their progress and agency towards self-determination.